

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAB-01 SAJ-01 OMB-01 /079 W

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R 070940Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5173

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 9243

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, RP

SUBJECT: MARCOS REANNOUNCES MINDANAO REORGANIZATION

REF: MANILA 5136

1. FOLLOWING JULY 4 SESSION WITH MUSLIM PARTICIPANTS
IN RECENTLY CONCLUDED SECOND ROUND OF ZAMBOANGA "PEACE
TALKS", PRESIDENT MARCOS PROCLAIMED ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES
WHICH PROMPTLY EVOKED HEADLINES SUCH AS BULLETIN'S
"SULU, BASILAN, MINDANAO NOW SELF GOVERNING". ALTHOUGH
FULL TEXTS OF VARIOUS DEGREE NOT YET AVAILABLE, IT IS
CLEAR ENOUGH THAT MEASURES (MOST OF WHICH ALREADY
ANNOUNCED IN APRIL, REFTEL) DO NOT AMOUNT TO "SELF-
GOVERNMENT" AND MAY BE LITTLE MORE THAN RESHUFFLING OF
STATUS QUO. PRESIDENT HAS CREATED TWO NEW REGIONS IN
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MINDANAO-SULU (BRINGING NATIONAL TOTAL TO 12). AREAS

OF HEAVIEST MUSLIM SETTLEMENT WILL LIE IN NEW REGION 9 (BASILAN, SULU, TAWI-TAWI, PAGADIAN AND ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR, WITH JOLO AS "REGIONAL CENTER") AND REGION 12 (LANAO PROVINCES AND ENTIRE COTABATO AREA EXCEPT FOR SOUTH COTABATO PROVINCE, WITH "REGIONAL CENTER" AT COTABATO CITY). ACCORDING PRESS, PRESIDENT SAID ALL FOUR REGIONS WOULD BE HEADED BY MUSLIM COMMISSIONERS WITH BROAD LOCAL POWERS (BUT RESPONSIBLE PERSONALLY TO HIM) AND ANNOUNCED NAMES OF TWO OF THEM - ADMIRAL ESPALDON FOR REGION 9 AND GOVERNOR SIMEON DATUMANONG OF MAGUINDANAO PROVINCE FOR REGION 12. (COMMENT: ACCORDING TO UNCONFIRMED REPORT, ADMIRAL ESPALDON WHO IS MILITARY COMMANDER FOR SULU AREA REPORTEDLY CONVERTED TO ISLAM DURING HIS TRIP TO MIDDLE EAST LAST JANUARY. CONTRARY TO PRESS VERSION, AS-YET UNANNOUNCED COMMISSIONERS OF REMAINING NEW REGIONS 10 AND 11 WHICH LIE IN HEAVILY NON-MUSLIM AREAS OF MINDANAO MAY TURN OUT TO BE CHRISTIANS.)

2. PRESIDENT ALSO REPORTEDLY APPOINTED BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF NEW SOUTHERN PHILIPPINE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (SPDA), BUT DID NOT GIVE NAMES. PRESIDENT FURTHER ANNOUNCED SHAKEUP IN CORRUPTION-RIDDEN MUSLIM-AREA SHOWPIECE MINDANAO STATE UNIVERSITY (MSU) AND APPOINTED A NEW MSU-PRESIDENT, TUCUD B. MACARAYA.

3. COMMENT: WE WILL ATTEMPT TO ANALYZE NEW MINDANAO ADMINISTRATION IN MORE DETAIL AS FACTS BECOME AVAILABLE. GUIDED MEDIA EFFORT TO PORTRAY REGIONAL RESHUFFLE AS STEP TOWARD GREATER LOCAL AUTONOMY (WHILE AT SAME TIME SPECIFYING THAT NEW COMMISSIONERS WILL BE APPOINTED BY AND RESPONSIBLE TO MARCOS ALONE) IS TRANSPARENT EVEN BY LOCAL STANDARDS.
PURNELL

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